

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 16415

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR, KN

SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON CHINA, KOREA

1. SUMMARY. DURING CALL BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON NOVEMBER 12, IGOR ROGACHEV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFS'S FIRST FAR EAST DIVISION (CHINA, KOREA), DESCRIBED CURRENT SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS AS UNCHANGED IN THE RECENT PAST AND UNLIKELY TO CHANGE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. MOSCOW'S POLICY DOES NOT DEPEND ON BREZHNEV OR ANY OTHER SOVIET LEADER, HE EMPHASIZED, AND THERE ARE NO DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP OR EVEN WITHIN THE SOVIET BUREAUCRACY ON THIS QUESTION. ROGACHEV SAW THE SO-CALLED RADICALS IN A WEAKER POSITION THAN THEY WERE SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TENG HSIAO-PING IS NOW THE
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PARAMOUNT LEADER IN CHINA. HE SAID THATTHE "WATER

MARGIN" CAMPAIGN WAS SO VAGUE THAT IT COULD STILL BE DIRECTED AT ANY OF THE LEADERS. HE SAW TENG HSIAO-PING AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO AS A KIND OF DIUMVIRATE AFTER MAO AND CHOU WITH CHANG'S PARTY ROLE MAKING HIM THE FIGURE LIKELY TO ASSUME EVENTUAL TOP LEADERSHIP. ROGACHEV DISMISSED CHINA AS A POTENTIAL MILITARY THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION BUT SAID IT WAS MOSCOW'S "DUTY" TO INFORM ITS PEOPLE ABOUT THE SITUATION THERE. A VISIT BY NORTH KOREAN PRESIDENT KIM IL-SUNG TO MOSCOW AS "ONE THE AGENDA," ROGACHEV SAID, BUT NO DATES HAD BEEN SET. ECONOMIC ACCORDS WITH PYONGYANG WOULD BE SIGNED SOON, HE CONCLUDED. END SUMMARY.

2. POLITICAL COUNSELOR OPENED CONVERSATION BY ASKING FOR ROGACHEV'S VIEWS ON THE CHINESE NOVEMBER 7 GREETING. ROGACHEV SAID THAT IT DID NOT SIGNIFY ANY SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE, BUT THAT THE CHINESE WORDING HAD BEEN SOFTER THAN USUAL. HE SAID, "IT SEEMS THEY WANTED THE MESSAGE TO BE PUBLISHED IN OUR PRESS THIS YEAR," A REFERENCE TO MOSCOW'S DELETION OF THE SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF LAST YEAR'S PRC MESSAGE. THE WORKING CONCERNING THE NEED FOR "FRIENDSHIP AND GOOD-NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS," ROGACHEV SAID, WAS EXACTLY THE FORMULATION WHICH MAO HAD USED IN SPEAKING TO THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE (THE DEPTU YEAD OF THE BORDER TALKS DELEGATION) ON MAY 1, 1970, AT TIEN AN MEN SQUARE.

3. IN DESCRIBING THE PRC LEADERSHIP, ROGACHEV SAID THAT IF ONE WERE TO DRAW A GRAPH, MAO'S POSITION WOULD HAVE REMAINED LEVEL OVER THE PAST YEAR; CHOU EN-LAI'S WOULD HAVE RISEN AT THE BEGINNING AND THEN FALLEN SHARPLY; TENG HSIAO-PING'S POSITION WOULD HAVE RISEN STEADILY AND DRAMATICALLY. ROGACHEV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TENG IS NOW THE LEADING AND MOST ACTIVE NATIONAL LEADER. HE SAID THAT ONE COULD NO LONGER SPEAK OF THREE DEFINITE GROUPS OR FACTIONS (RADICALS, MODERATES, AND MILITARY). THESE GROUPS HAVE NOW BECOME INTERLINKED, LIKE THE CIRCLES IN THE EMBLEM OF THE OLYMPICS. THE RADICALS ARE NOW, FOR EXAMPLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. AT THE RECENT TACHAI CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE, THE MAIN SPEECHES WERE DELIVERED BY PUBLIC SECURITY MINISTER HUA KUO-FENG AND BY CHIANG CHING. THAT WOULD BE LIKE ANDROPOV DELIVERING AN AGRICULTURAL REPORT IN THE USSR, HE SAID. IN SOME WAYS, SAID ROGACHEV, IT IS A GOOD SIGN THAT THESE "NEW LEADERS" ARE BECOMING INVOLVED IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ACCORDING TO ROGACHEV, MAO IS STILL

PRESSING SUCH LEADERS TO MAKE ANTI-SOVIET REMARKS. CHOU EN-LAI IS CLEARLY VERY ILL; SOME REPORTS SAY HE HAS CANCER, SOME SAY HEART DISEASE, AND THERE HAVE BEEN MANY RUMORS THAT HE RECENTLY HAD A SECOND MAJOR OPERATION, ROGACHEV SAID. WITH REGARD TO LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES, ROGACHEV NOTED THAT THE PEOPLES DAILY HAD CARRIED A MOST PECULAR ITEM REPORTING THAT A DELEGATION OF WORKERS HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY "LEADING FIGURES" OF THE STATE COUNCIL, BUT GIVING NO NAMES. THE ACCOMPANYING PHOTO WAS TOO SMALL TO IDENTIFY THE PERSONS IN THE GROUP. THERE ARE NOW RUMORS OF IMPENDING CHANGES IN THE STATE COUNCIL, POSSIBLY EVEN INCLUDING A NEW PREMIER, HE SAID.

4. THE NEW STRUCTURE FOR THE POST-MAO/CHOU PERIOD IS ALREADY IN PLACE, SAID ROGACHEV. THE ONLY REMAINING QUESTIONS ARE THE NAMES OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND OF THE NEW PARTY CHIEF. TENG HSIAO-PING IS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE AS PRIME MINISTER AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAL IS THE MOST PROBABLY AS PARTY CHIEF. HE IS NOW ACTING IN THAT CAPACITY, SAID ROGACHEV. IN ADDITION, CHANG CONTROLS THE POLITICAL WORK OF THE ARMY, WHICH MAY BE A MORE IMPORTANT FUNCTION THAN THAT OF CHIEF OF STAFF. HE IS MAO'S MAN IN THE ARMY. TOGETHER WITH HIS CONTROL OVER SHANGHAI, THIS COMBINATION GIVES HIM SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ALREADY AND THE POTENTIAL FOR MORE.

CHIANG CHING HAS NOT BEEN VERY ACTIVE LATELY BUT HAS BEGUN SPEAKING IN AREAS OUTSIDE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS. SHE MAY GET A HIGH POSITION AFTER MAO DIES BUT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE LARGELY CEREMONIAL, ROGACHEV SPECULATES. WANG HUNG-WEN WAS OBVIOUSLY MAO'S CHOICE FOR A PREDOMINANT ROLE, BUT THE EFFORT TO PROMOTE
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HIM HAS NOT BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL. HE IS NOT POPULAR, SAID ROGACHEV, AND "WE HAVE GOOD EVIDENCE" THAT HE WAS RECENTLY CRITICIZED WITHIN THE PARTY. THIS MAY EXPLAIN WHY HE IS IN SHANGHAI, WHERE HE APPEARED ON NATIONAL DAY AND WAS DESCRIBED WITHOUT MENTION BEING MADE OF HIS TITLE, AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. HE MAY EVEN BE AT A MAY 7 SCHOOL, ROGACHEV LAUGHINGLY COMMENTED. THIS MAY HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH THE FACT THAT FRG CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD ASKED TO VISIT SHANGHAI BUT HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN. YAO WEN-YUAN IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WANG, SAID ROGACHEV, BECAUSE HE CONTROLS THE PROPAGANDA APPARATUS. THE RADICALS AS A WHOLE SEEM TO BE LESS PROMINENT, BUT SOME OF THEM, LIKE CHANG, HUA AND CHI TENG-KWEI, HAVE BEEN QUITE ACTIVE. LIKEWISE SOME MILITARY FIGURES, ESPECIALLY CHEN HSI-LEIN, HAVE BEEN VERY ACTIVE.

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5. THE "WATER MARGIN" CAMPAIGN HAS FOCUSED ON NO CLEAR TARGET, ROGACHEV SAID. NO LEADER HAS HIMSELF SPOKEN ABOUT IT AND THE NUMEROUS ARTICLES LEND THEMSELVES TO VARYING AND CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS. IT COULD STILL BE TURNED AGAINST ANY OF THE TOP LEADERS FROM MAO DOWN.

6. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE IMPACT ON CHINA'S POLICY OF

POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, ROGACHEV SAID THAT THERE ARE NO DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE. IF THE CHINESE ATTRIBUTE CURRENT POLICY TO BREZHNEV, "THEY ARE WRONG," HE ASSERTED. EVEN IF BREZHNEV WERE TO STEP DOWN TOMORROW, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN SOVIET POLICY TOWARD CHINA. KRUSHCHEV'S CHINA POLICY, ROGACHEV SAID, HAD NOT BEEN CHANGED BY HIS SUCCESSORS. HE WAS AN IMPETUOUS LEADER AND MADE SOME MISTAKES, BUT HE WAS RIGHT ON THAT ISSUE, SAID ROGACHEV.

7. ROGACHEV DISMISSED THE POTENTIAL OF A MILITARY THREAT TO THE USSR FROM CHINA, SAYING THAT THE CHINESE WOULD NOT PROVOKE ANY SERIOUS CONFRONTATION. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS OUR "DUTY" TO INFORM OUR PEOPLE ABOUT THE SITUATION IN CHINA, ESPECIALLY THE MILITARIZATION OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY, HE SAID. BUT SOVIET EFFORTS, HE CONTINUED, (FILMS, LECTURES, ARTICLES), HAVE NOTHING LIKE THE SCOPE THAT THE CHINESE PROPAGANDA HAS. MOSCOW CANNOT EXCLUDE THAT A MADMAN IN CHINA COULD PURSUE AN ADVENTURISTIC COURSE BUT, BARRING THAT, THE CHANCES OF THE CHINESE ACTUALLY INAUGURATING HOSTILITIES ARE ALMOST NIL. SOONER OR LATER, HE SAID, THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE WILL HAVE GOOD-NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS, AS MAO SAID. AFTER MAO IT IS QUITE PROBABLE THAT A "TIDE OF REVISIONISM" WILL SWEEP OVER CHINA, SAID ROGACHEV, HALF JESTING. CLEARLY THE PEOPLE WANT A BETTER LIFE AND IT TAKES NO SPECIAL PERCEPTION TO SEE THAT CHINA IS AN EXTREMELY POOR AND ISOLATED COUNTRY.

8. TURNING TO KOREA, ROGACHEV SAID THAT A VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION BY PRESIDENT KIM IL-SUNG IS "ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AGENDA," BUT THAT NO DATES HAD BEEN SET. KOREA, LIKE VIETNAM, WANTS TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO MEASURE THE BALANCE OF THESE RELATIONS. MOSCOW AND PYONGYANG WILL SOON SIGN NEW ACCORDS ON ECONOMIC RELATIONS, ROGACHEV SAID, SINCE MANY OF THE PREVIOUS ACCORDS HAVE EXPIRED. MATLOCK

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